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Housekeepers' Chat

Wednesday, December 12, 1928.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: Potatoes in Soup and Salad. From Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes." (Contains lots of good Christmas recipes.)

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"Say, listen," I began. The Menu Specialist looked up from her work.

"Say, listen; here's a radio friend of ours who wants a recipe for a Potato Salad."

"A Potato Salad," said the Menu Specialist, "what does she mean -- a Potato Salad!"

"Maybe she's young," I said, "maybe she's a very young bride, who doesn't know that there are at least a dozen potato salads."

"A dozen!" exclaimed the Menu Specialist, "why Aunt Sammy, don't you know there are at least -- "

"Oh, sure," I said, blushing -- "Of course I know there are at least two dozen potato salads. But what shall we tell the young bride?"

"Give her some recipes, and some general information about cooking potatoes. Here's a good article written by Dr. Louise Stanley, Chief of the Bureau of Home Economics. Let's read this to the girl:

"Potatoes are abundant this year, which is good news to the housewife, because of all vegetables, potatoes are the most used. How could we plan so many well-balanced dinners, without using potatoes as the starchy vegetable, to go with a fresh succulent one?

"There are countless ways of preparing potatoes; baked, boiled, steamed, and fried in many ways, with various added seasonings.

"The mealy potato is at its best when baked. Scrub the potatoes well, and let them stand in cold water until the oven is ready. Potatoes cook in a shorter time if they are put into an oven heated to a moderate temperature, but they may be baked acceptably if they are put in when the oven is lighted. Then less fuel is required. Cook the potatoes until tender, when pierced. This takes from 50 minutes to an hour or longer, depending upon the size of

the potato, and whether placed in a hot or a cold oven. Baked potatoes lose no food value, retain all their flavor, and develop some extra flavor by browning of the outside portion. Care should be taken not to cook them so done that this outside is baked hard, since it is the most delicious part. If the potatoes are opened, when removed from the oven, the steam escapes and sogginess is prevented. Add butter when the potato has been opened, salt and pepper, or a dash of paprika, and your potato is ready for the table.

"If you want to dress up a baked potato, scoop out the center, cream it, put it back into the oven with a little added butter on the top, and allow to brown, or add cheese over the top, just before browning.

"Next to baking, the simplest method of cooking is boiling. Peel the potatoes, but do not cut them up unless the water is to be thickened and served with the potato. Remember, in peeling, to keep the peelings as thin as possible. New potatoes may be scraped; very old potatoes that are shrivelled should be freshened by soaking in cold water before peeling. Always put them into boiling water, never into cold. Boil rapidly, to make the potatoes mealy. A knitting needle, used to test, prevents breaking. Since some of the food value may be dissolved in the water, use this in soup or gravy if possible. Boiled potatoes may be seasoned, and served, or mashed.

"Steaming is another method of cooking potatoes. Steaming prevents the loss of soluble portions. Drain or wipe the cold water from the potatoes, and transfer them to the steamer. Close tight, and steam until done. This will require a longer time than boiling. Remove from over the water, as soon as done, in order to prevent getting soggy. Steamed potatoes keep their shape better than boiled ones, but never are quite so mealy. They are especially desirable for salads, and diced potato dishes, when you want the pieces to hold their shape.

• "Potatoes are not only a good source of energy, but are also valuable as a source of mineral salts and vitamins. In fact, the sailors of older days were able to keep off scurvy, so long as the potato supply held out.

"Here's a good, easy-to-make recipe for Quick Potato Soup, which might come in handy these chilly winter days. Five ingredients, for Quick Potato Soup:

1/2 cup grated potato	1 slice onion
3 cups milk, or milk and water	1 tablespoon butter, and Salt or celery salt.

Once more, the five ingredients for Quick Potato Soup: (Repeat)

Mix the ingredients, and bring them quickly to the boiling point. Cook until the liquid thickens. Remove the onion, and add the salt and fat. Serve strained or unstrained. A little very finely chopped parsley may be used for extra flavor. Grated carrots or rutabaga turnips, both of which contain Vitamin C, may be used in addition to the grated potato. If old, they should be cooked in a little water before being added to the milk, unless the soup is to be strained.

So much for the Potato Soup.

Potato Salads come up for discussion next. The foods I like particularly well in Potato Salads are cucumber, radishes, and cress, but of course they aren't generally available in mid-winter.

When the Menu Specialist gave me her Potato Salad suggestions, she told me to be sure and make this idea stand out: That a potato, when cold, is such a bland flavored, starchy substance that in order to become an attractive salad, it needs to be combined with something crisp, succulent, of distinctive flavor, and if possible of attractive color. The lettuce or other green served with Potato Salad answers some of these purposes, but not all of them.

I'm very glad to repeat the Menu Specialist's words. I've gone to church suppers myself, and I have eaten some very tame and uninteresting Potato Salads.

Before they are made into salads, potatoes should be marinated; that is, soaked in a french dressing, for an hour or so.

Excellent garnishes for potato salad are hard-cooked eggs, sardines, strips of kippered herring or other smoked fish. A little anchovy paste in the dressing would add piquancy.

I have here a list of one dozen suggestions for Winter Potato Salads. If you care to write this list, you may find a number of combinations which you have not used: (Read slowly)

1. Potato, pickled beets, and onion.
2. Potato, crisped bacon, onion or chopped pickle.
3. Potato, dill pickle, and shredded cabbage.
4. Potato, chopped olives, and green peppers.
5. Potato, fried ham in cubes, and minced onion.
6. Potato, stuffed chopped olives, and onion juice.
7. Potato, raw turnip, and apples.
8. Potatoes, capers, onion, and celery.
9. Potatoes, string beans, diced carrots, and minced onion.
10. Potatoes, bacon crisped, canned peas, horseradish in French dressing.
11. Potato, celeriac (celery root), and minced onion.
12. Potato, celery, cabbage, minced parsley, and finely-chopped pickle.

Tomorrow: Simple Plumbing Repairs in the Home. Also menu and recipe.

